USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

WINNING THE PEACE: BUILDING A STRATEGIC LEVEL LESSONS LEARNED PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

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   The US military has developed a robust, comprehensive system to capture, analyze, and disseminate tactical and operational level lessons learned from training events and ongoing conflict operations. Together with Joint Forces Command, the Services are working to expand their lessons learned efforts at the operational level and to incorporate the Theater Strategic arena.   These efforts remain focused on warfighting issues – Major Combat Operations. No comparable system exists at the strategic level to address post-conflict issues.

   Over the last three decades, US Armed Forces have regularly been involved in conflicts where "winning the peace" has taken on greater significance. Post-conflict operations often dominate the military planning process as well as the interests and energies of US National Command Authority, Department of State and other government and non-government agencies.

   Many of these agencies have developed lessons learned programs, with a peacekeeping, stability operations focus. However, there is no single agency or process that has taken on the challenge of monitoring all these efforts with the goal of sorting, analyzing, and globally sharing key operational and strategic lessons learned.

   This paper proposes an approach to achieve interagency and military cooperation on the collection, analysis, and sharing of strategic level lessons learned.

WINNING THE PEACE: BUILDING A STRATEGIC LEVEL LESSONS LEARNED PROGRAM

Let's start by recalling an old maxim attributed to the 19th century philosopher George Santayana that goes something like this: *those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it.* Perhaps in no other endeavor or "life experience" is the impact of this maxim, or rather the failure to abide by it, so important, as in the conduct of warfare. The study of warfare – to include leaders and campaigns dating much farther back in time than Santayana's *discovery* of this truism – is replete with examples of leaders who have both acknowledged and abided by this maxim – and those who have not. Looking back only as far as WWII, generals Patton, Marshall, MacArthur, Guderian, and Rommel were noted military historians as well as brilliant strategists and tacticians – their successes on the battlefield are legendary, and attributable equally to their personal study of warfare as to their deep commitment not to repeat the mistakes of those who had gone before them. Many others military commanders, both past and present, also students of history, would likewise attribute their successes and failures at the operational and tactical levels to this simple, yet most astute concept. They would also place high value on the effort and resources required for mounting and sustaining effective lessons learned endeavors and for maintaining robust and well-managed repositories where this wisdom can be stored and from which relevant lessons can be retrieved. The renowned British strategist B.H. Liddell Hart noted:

> … there are two forms of practical experience [lessons learned?], direct and indirect – and that, of the two, indirect practical experience may be more valuable because (it is) infinitely wider. Even in the most active career, especially a soldier's career, the scope and possibilities of direct experience are extremely limited. … the greater value of indirect experience lies in its greater variety and extent. … the experiences not of another, but of many others under manifold conditions. [1]

But what of our non-military national leaders; government agencies and other non-government organizations (NGO), international organizations (IO) and the diplomatic community who often find themselves in direct contact with the military, especially in the areas of stability, support, transition and reconstruction operations (SSTRO)? All of these operations now considered core in the spectrum of military operations; operations where the military should not necessarily have the lead, but most often do because "no one else can do it."   Have these agencies and activities also not pursued a purposeful and effective lessons learned program? There seems to be little historical data to attest to this one way or the other – an issue we will note often in this study. This gap or apparent gap of not having a structured, ongoing and

managed lessons learned program outside the military environment, leads us to the underlying precept of this study – the need to incorporate, along with the military community, key political, diplomatic and interagency players – domestic and international – into a strategic level lessons learned environment.

At no time in the history of our nation and perhaps the history of warfare has the interest in and need for capturing and learning from the lessons and experiences of others become more important than it is today. Likewise, at no time in history, given the *volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (V-U-C-A)* nature of the operational environment within which current military operations occur[2] – e.g. post-conflict operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the global war on terrorism (GWOT) – and which are projected to exist for the foreseeable future, is the task of getting *the right information to the right individual at the right time* more challenging for those who would subscribe to this business of "lessons learned." Consider the volume of information, raw data that is or can be made available using existing Information Technology (IT) systems and architectures, and the powerful command and control (C2) systems on the battlefield today. Army C2 initiatives and enabling technologies like Force XXI Battle Command Brigade and Below (FBCB2), Command and Control PC (C2PC), Battle Command on the Move (BCOTM), Common Operational Picture (COP) are examples of systems and concepts, all developed with the goal of providing our military commanders with tactical and operational "information superiority" thereby achieving "information dominance" – during either combat operations or while performing post-conflict, stability and support operations.[3]

Unfortunately, these technologies are often based on a "more is better" mindset.   What this leads to is the proverbial "information overload" syndrome – where raw data, unprocessed information actually overwhelms the commander and his/her staff and is therefore more counterproductive than helpful. Each commander and his or her staff have to take time to sort, sift and filter out what is not of interest to them – nullifying any apparent advantage gained from pure volume. Equally important, we need to ask, "Who needs to know this information right now?", and, "What is the best way to get this information to them as quickly as possible?" Although our IT development community continues to struggle with being able to provide the "dial-a-filter" capability (by level-of-command, geographical area, staff position) that our commanders need to automate this process or a major portion of it – we're not quite there yet.

Within the construct of warfare, lessons are learned, or need to be learned, across the full spectrum of conflict – all types of operations, all battlefield domains (air, land, sea and space) and at all levels, tactical through strategic. The US military has developed a robust, comprehensive system to capture, analyze, and disseminate tactical and operational level

lessons learned from major training events and ongoing conflict operations. The individual Services' lessons learned agencies, together with Joint Forces Command, are working to expand their lessons learned efforts further into the operational level and to begin to include observations, insights and lessons from the Theater Strategic arena.   These efforts continue to be predominantly focused on warfighting issues – Major Combat Operations (what we refer to in the Joint Operations Planning Process as Phase II – Seize the Initiative, and Phase III – Dominate). No comparable system exists to address strategic/national, non-warfighting (non-kinetic) issues and activity – especially in the area of post-conflict operations (Phase IV – Stabilize, and Phase V – Enable Civil Authorities).[4]

Over the last two to three decades, US Armed Forces have regularly been involved in conflicts where "winning the peace" has taken on greater significance. As recent operations in Bosnia/Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq have shown, more and more in contemporary conflict operations, it's the 'war after the war' that counts – this is the war we really have to "win" to be able to declare complete and lasting success. If we don't win this one, the war may never be over! Accordingly, post-conflict operations often dominate the military planning process as well as the interests and energies of US National Command Authority, Department of State and other government and non-government agencies – international and domestic. Many of these agencies have developed a lessons learned program of some sort – with both input into and output from these programs provided in the format of mission reports, after action reports, mission evaluations; most often with a peacekeeping, stability operations focus. However, there is no single agency or process that has taken on the challenge of monitoring these efforts with the goal of sorting, analyzing, and globally sharing the key operational and strategic lessons learned coming from these agencies. Likewise the multitude of formats used, agency jargon and focus reflected in these documents, where they exist, and the lack of any type of database structure or searchable database environment within which to maintain them, significantly reduces the potential and the value of this information. This study proposes an approach to achieve more comprehensive participation and cooperation by the interagency community on the analysis and sharing of Strategic National level lessons learned through the implementation of a Strategic Lessons Learned Program (SLLP). Although this study will focus on the development of a US sponsored program and its US voluntary and mandated members – the US Armed Forces, Executive and other government agencies (OGA), and US-based and sponsored non-government organizations (NGO); the incorporation of international participants will be mentioned throughout. The SLLP concept is expandable to readily include international membership and participation although there are still significant information security, information

sharing issues that need to be overcome to allow full integration of and participation by the international community – issues beyond the scope of this study.

Service Programs – Tactical and Operational Lessons Learned

There exists today within each of the Services and USJFCOM a robust lessons learned program that fulfills their needs at the tactical and operational levels. Each Service has an "official" lessons learned center or designated internal agency with the mission to "collect, analyze, disseminate and archive lessons learned from ongoing combat operations and training events" (or words to that effect) – to include major national, Service and command level simulations-supported exercises and experiments such as Joint/Unified Endeavor, Bright Star (EUCOM), Internal Look, Cobra Gold (PACOM), Lucky Warrior (CENTCOM), etc. In most cases there are also doctrinal and/or Service level regulatory documents that articulate duties and responsibilities across and within the particular Service giving guidance as to how individuals, units and commands are to participate in and contribute to these lessons learned programs – e.g. Army Regulation 11-33: The Army Lessons Learned Program (ALLP).

The Army's Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL)[5] is part of the Combined Arms Command (CAC), a major subordinate command of the Army's Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), commanded by a 3-star general and located at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Of interest, the last two commanders of CAC have been LTG William Wallace (Commander, CJTF-5 during Phase I-III operations, Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) – now Commanding General, TRADOC) and most recently, LTG David Petraeus (Commander, 101st Air Assault Division during OIF and, in February 2007, named to take command of all US military forces and operations in Iraq) – giving the Army lessons learned program ideal oversight and guidance based on their personal experiences in Iraq and GWOT. The Director, CALL is an active duty Army colonel (06/COL). The Air Force lessons learned program, also directed by an 06/COL, uses what they refer to as "XOL" as their lessons learned agency. The Air Force lessons learned cell is located in Rosslyn, VA just a short distance from the Pentagon. XOL, and the USAF lessons learned group, is a subordinate agency of Department of the Air Force Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations (G-3). [6] In addition to addressing system and platform specific issues (e.g. F-16, C-17 - performance and vulnerabilities), the Air Force lessons learned cell focuses a significant amount of attention on multi-Service interoperability issues and other lessons learned at the operational level – e.g. army air-ground operations/close air support (AAG/CAS), Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR), force protection/air base security, ground convoy operations. The US Marine Corps (USMC) agency, the Marine Corps Center for

Lessons Learned (MCCLL), is a subordinate organization within the Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC), located at Quantico, VA.[7] The US Navy (USN) has a lessons learned cell to address multi-Service, interoperability issues as well as a group within their lessons learned program that is focused primarily on fleet operations/fleet management and ship/system specific issues.[8] As with the Army and the Air Force, the USMC and USN agencies have an 06/COL and 06/CAPT (Captain) respectively as their Director. For the joint community, the Joint Training Directorate and Joint Warfighting Center (J7/ JWFC) at US Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM) in Suffolk, VA conducts and manages the Joint Lesson Learned Program (JLLP).[9] The joint lessons learned program occasionally reaches into the military, theater strategic level but concentrates primarily on the operational level of war and on joint, interoperability issues – issues that are most often identified by the individual Services and submitted to JFCOM for further 'joint implications' analysis and resolution. The joint program's lessons learned data is sometimes redundant with the Services' data as information and raw data is regularly shared between the Service lessons learned activities and JFCOM. JFCOM will reassess input from the individual Services by providing additional analysis on the Service's source data to extract and more fully describe key joint interoperability issues and, as appropriate, reformat the information to be more appropriate for the joint audience and user community and to populate the joint lessons learned web-based databases and repositories. To better support the Army's transformation to a joint, expeditionary force, CALL, within their Joint Operations Integration Branch (JOIB), has embedded full time Army liaison officers (LNO) within the Air Force and Marine Corps lessons learned agencies to provide real-time feedback to CALL through continuous interaction with these two Services. The JOIB at CALL also supports a small cell from the Joint Staff (J-7) in their headquarters at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. This J-7 cell provides additional connectivity and interaction across the Services as well as with the lessons learned cells maintained by the Geographic Combatant Commanders (GCCs) – e.g. EUCOM and CENTCOM, all of which have very active lessons learned programs.

As mentioned previously, the DoD lessons learned community is working to expand their lessons learned efforts even further into the operational arena and to incorporate both Theater Strategic (military focus) and National Strategic issues and concerns. However, we can expect that these expanded efforts will remain focused on warfighting – i.e. those issues and lessons determined from or during Major Combat Operations (Phase II / III), and the role of military forces in Stabilization (Phase IV) and Enable Civil Authorities (Phase V) operations – with little coverage of interagency operations except as it pertains to the role of military forces in stability,

support, transition and reconstruction (SSTR) operations as part of an interagency led project or program.

Another DoD agency that plays a significant role within the tactical and operational level lessons learned community is the Air, Land, Sea Application Center (ALSA) located at Langley AFB, VA.[10] ALSA supports and is supported by all the Services and works closely with JFCOM and the Service lessons learned agencies to develop what are called multi-Service Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (MTTP) that focus on joint interoperability issues coming from operational theaters. ALSA vets all their products with the combatant commanders, the individual Services, and JFCOM before general release to the lessons learned user community – to include DoD, civilian agencies, and individuals. Often, MTTPs, along with other lessons learned products, form the basis for changes to existing joint and Service doctrinal publications. A particular area where ALSA products have shown to be most useful is in providing training on joint staff procedures – as used within a Joint Task Force (JTF) headquarters environment – for individual Service staff officers. Other specialty lessons learned programs have also been developed within the Services and DoD to provide just-in-time, tailored and often mission-critical and truly life-saving information to our Soldiers and leaders in all the Services – e.g. the Improvised Explosive Device (IED) Defeat lessons learned program.[11]

From this discussion it is obvious that, at the tactical and operational level, we have robust lessons learned processes and agencies within the Services and the joint community; that a great amount of valuable information is available, accessible and continues to grow. The lessons learned process at these levels is in "high gear" and, for the most part, the Services are adequately resourced to do the job they need to do. "The U.S. military's "lessons learned" process is exceptionally valuable in capturing useful knowledge from past U.S. military operations. However, … there is no system that can provide comparable information for nonmilitary operations."[12]; no comparable system exists to address Theater Strategic (military focus) or Strategic National issues – especially in the area of post-conflict operations – specifically, stability, support, transition and reconstruction operations (SSTRO). The Beyond Goldwater – Nichols Phase 1 Report concluded that "… there continues to exist … a consistent US inability to effectively integrate political, military, economic, humanitarian and other dimensions of complex contingency operations."[13]

At the strategic level then, there is an apparent gap in the lessons learned environment – both in construct and in content.   Concerning content, as we move toward implementing a SLLP, we are beginning to understand that, at the strategic level, it is more and more important, if not absolutely essential, to address lessons learned from the interagency, civil-military and

multinational perspective – not just from the US military, DoD perspective. At the strategic level it is more important to "… emphasize qualitative issues over quantitative measures and to seek to identify and understand effects, positive and necessary, wherever possible. … more valuable to document and reflect on such experience."[14] Overarching national strategy and policy, not just national military strategy (theater strategic), needs to be addressed within a strategic level lessons learned program to identify critical observations, insights and lessons that need to be captured, analyzed, and archived for future reference. There needs to be a separate information campaign mounted to advise the larger strategic lessons learned Communities of Interest (COI) – to steal a Knowledge Management concept – of the existence of the program itself, and the nature of the strategic level lessons learned data available. State-of-the-art information technologies need to be brought to bear to prepare this information for rapid distribution and access.

Strategic Lessons Learned – What's out there now ?

On the DoD side, the individual Service programs, the JFCOM program and the programs managed by the geographical combatant commanders (GCC) are beginning to move into the strategic level with the JFCOM program being the most aggressive. One of the major drawbacks for the Services and JFCOM in implementing a SLLP is finding 'strategic' level analysts; individuals with the necessary skills, knowledge and attributes to do the necessary strategic level analysis; individuals with comprehensive knowledge of the planning and conduct of military campaigns and theater operations and experience in dealing with the civilian interagency community – international and domestic. On the interagency side, several agencies have already developed a lessons learned program that includes strategic level issues or have the makings of what could become a viable strategic lessons learned program – all almost exclusively focusing on peacekeeping, nation-building, and stability operations. Some of the US agencies and organizations in the private sector that have existing programs include: the US Agency for International Development (USAID), the US Institute for Peace (USIP), the Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI), the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), and the National Institute of Justice (NIJ). Internationally, the most robust and proactive agency is the United Nation's Directorate of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). The DPKO Best Practices Unit (BPU) "…has begun to generate the sort of timely, mission-analytic reporting that UN Headquarters, operations, and mission contributors have long needed."[15] "The BPU not only provides a repository for lessons learned but also facilitates their incorporation in education and training through clear analytical reports."[16]

The good news is that there are many agencies out there doing lessons learned. However, there are many challenges both in being able to find this information and in being able to use it. Within these programs, each agency mainly looks to 'help themselves', expending little effort with the actions taken (data collected, analysis conducted, archives populated) and the products developed to prepare their potentially critical information for sharing and use outside their agency. Data is usually captured in post-event reports which are very often prepared in a proprietary format that neither lends itself to a common understanding of the content, nor to database operations and otherwise efficient web-based search and retrieval technologies. The content is focused intentionally either on internal agency and organizational interests, or on developing the specialized expertise the agency needs for its operations, using terminology and describing parochial processes, most of which are not understandable to a wider audience – civilian or military. For the international community, these products may be totally incomprehensible! The associated agency websites, if available, are seldom developed with any interest in providing a user interface that facilitates accessing their lessons learned information by non-agency personnel – site navigation is often complex and non-intuitive. So, it appears that there is a significant volume of information out there on the interagency / non-military side, but getting to it, understanding it and then being able to use it poses yet another set of challenges along the way to building a user-friendly, accessible and content-rich strategic lessons learned environment. Simply achieving awareness of who's doing what, what's available, and then gaining access to it in a relatively easy and efficient manner are problems the SLLP must be prepared to address and overcome. Not surprisingly, there is no single agency, program or process that has taken on the challenge of monitoring, assessing, and attempting to coordinate these disparate efforts. The goal of finding, sorting or cataloging, analyzing, normalizing, archiving and globally sharing key operational and strategic, non-military lessons learned information is a daunting task. This study proposes an approach that can help both the military and the interagency communities to achieve significantly improved cooperation on the collection, analysis, consolidation, and sharing of Theater Strategic (military focus) and Strategic National level lessons learned – and the subsequent integration and application of these lessons into policy, procedures and programs needed to support future crises.

Why We Need a Strategic Level Lessons Learned Program

It is a reasonable expectation that future conflict operations involving the commitment of U.S. armed forces will include planning for and the conduct of what we have been referring to as "SSTR" operations – stability, support, transition and reconstruction operations – activities

encompassing a combination of independent military, cooperative and simultaneous civil-military, and civilian interagency only operations. Differing from our recent experience in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), we can expect that civilian agencies will be employed much sooner than they were in Iraq, and that civilian managed (non-combat) operations will likewise begin sooner and may even be conducted simultaneously with predominantly military led (combat / kinetic) operations throughout the geographic theater of operations; with the additional expectation that these strategic operations will more and more become the domain of the civilian interagency community. "… there will be a continuing need for effective operational transitions between the peacekeeping forces of regional organizations (interagency) and coalitions (the military)."[17] As mentioned previously, our phasing model for joint operations includes a Phase IV – Stabilize, and a Phase V – Enable Civil Authority; peace-building / peace-keeping will be a major element of future operations, with associated activities being conducted by both the military and the interagency community during these phases.

> … our Joint Forces (must) … enhance their ability to operate in consonance with other US Government agencies, and with NGOs and IOs … The specialized access and knowledge these organizations possess … (can help to) … prevent conflict, resolve a crisis, … and restore civil government (more effectively) upon conflict termination.[18]

"Soldiers, police and civilian personnel … rarely train together (beforehand), and often have very little direct knowledge of the others' profession culture."[19] This will definitely complicate matters as they attempt to work together in the complex Phase IV-V environment. Understanding professional culture helps to break down the barriers to cooperation and helps to build the trust and understanding that is so essential for achieving constructive discussions on the deficiencies and problem areas to be overcome. Even a simple listing of just the problems experienced during previous attempts to work together, regardless of solutions attempted or achieved, would go a long way to providing some awareness of 'what to expect' as well as helping leaders and planners focus on areas where military-civilian cooperation is critical to mission success – especially when working with and within the indigenous population – on the street corner, in their market-business-corporate community, and in the law enforcement and local and national political environment.

Before charging off 'full-speed-ahead', a moment of honest introspection is perhaps appropriate. It is a disappointing fact that within the U.S. the lessons learned-AAR culture is very inconsistent and, in some instances, the necessary culture of sharing, the culture of cooperation and learning is non-existent outside of our military-police-firefighting communities; within the interagency community many individuals, from action officer and staff level to the

senior leadership don't "feel good" about the information-sharing process needed for an effective lessons learned program – especially when it comes to acknowledging, analyzing, discussing, and actually recording mistakes made, shortfalls, deficiencies. These individuals are often reluctant to participate in open and constructive "After Action Reviews" (AAR); a situation attributable as much to not understanding the AAR process as to having experienced an AAR that was not properly conducted and facilitated. There is also always that lingering fear or concern that adverse consequences will result from openly admitting mistakes and/or problems, or, causing even greater trepidation, drawing attention to those mistakes or problems caused by leaders and supervisors. Within the SLLP, you need to envision doing this in a multi-agency and even multi-national environment. Consider a team or unit made up of a collection of participants from just a few other nations or agencies conducting an AAR – considerations like national pride and agency loyalty begin to influence not only the level of participation, but also the 'integrity' of the input – i.e. just how truthful will they be; how much 'license' will be taken in recounting the 'facts'? Integrating the interagency community by including them in various unit level military lessons learned events, where lives may be at stake, provides yet even more challenges and concerns and sometimes non-productive skepticism – especially from our military leaders at all levels.

Understanding each other's culture is an important component for any integrated lessons learned program. Within the military, "…staffs are generally not trained to appreciate the magnitude of the interagency process and the challenges inherent in dealing with dozens of other organizations in the operational area."[20] For the most part, cooperation and collaboration has been conducted or is conducted in an ad hoc nature with varying levels of commitment from the interagency players and the military. Subsequent efforts to effectively integrate any lessons learned into civilian agency policy and operations is nominal at best and any further tracking of these lessons and their application within the organizations, any effectiveness assessments are mostly non-existent. Of course, all of this makes it even harder to build for the future by learning from the past – the ultimate coin-of-the-realm for a lessons learned program. Within the interagency community, this "ad hoc approach to coordination and integration … (must) give way to a full time Interagency Operations Center (IOC)…"[21] under the direction of the National Security Council (NSC) with dedicated support from key players in the interagency community – e.g. USAID, Department of Justice, Department of the Treasury – and the military lessons learned community.

The establishment of this IOC under the direction of the NSC is consistent with guidance and responsibilities laid out in National Security Presidential Directive/NSPD-44 which directs

the Secretary of State to "… coordinate and lead integrated United States Government efforts, involving all U.S. Departments and Agencies with relevant capabilities, to prepare, plan for, and conduct stabilization and reconstruction activities."[22] Under the specific control of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) – a position created by NSPD-44 – the Secretary of State will "identify lessons learned and integrate them into operations" and "coordinate reconstruction and stabilization activities and preventative strategies with foreign countries, international and regional organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and private sector entities … (to) facilitate … work with respect to these institutions and bodies."[23] The Directive attempts to ensure full cooperation and integration with the military lessons learned processes / programs by further directing the Secretary of State to "… coordinate such efforts with the Secretary of Defense to ensure harmonization with any planned or ongoing U.S. military operations…"[24] A Presidential Policy Coordination Committee (PCC) for Reconstruction and Stabilization Operations is also established, chaired by the S/CRS, within which designated U.S. executive departments and agencies are to "assist in … responding to crises that occur, assessing lessons learned, and undertaking other efforts … to ensure (that) a coordinated U.S. response and effective international reconstruction and stabilization efforts (occur)."[25]

Implementing a Strategic Lessons Learned Program (SLLP)

It is apparent from the discussion above that the beginnings of an infrastructure already exist for implementing a Strategic Level Lessons Learned Program (SLLP). On the interagency side, the NSC clearly has the documented authority and direction to take the lead and responsibility for participation in such a program, to include coordinating the participation of interagency players. In addition to NSPD-44, Presidential Decision Directive-56 (PDD-56), President Clinton's policy on managing complex contingency operations, gives very specific guidance and direction to the interagency community concerning lessons learned. "The PDD is designed to ensure that the lessons learned – including proven planning processes and implementation mechanisms – will be incorporated into the interagency process on a regular basis."[26] The PDD directs that "after the conclusion of each operation … the ExCom (will) charter an after-action review involving both those who participated in the operation and Government experts who monitored its execution. (The AAR) will include a review of IA planning and coordination (both in Washington and in the field), …problems, … proposed solutions, in order to capture lessons learned and to ensure their dissemination to relevant agencies."[27] But, is this really happening? What has been done to date? Where are these reports and how do others get to them? What "integration" has taken place? How do we know?

To better substantiate and define the military's role and responsibilities, DoD Directive 3000.05 (DODD 3000.05) directs the SecDef to "… develop a process to facilitate information sharing for stability operations among the DoD Components, and relevant U.S. Departments and Agencies, foreign governments … International Organizations, NGOs, and members of the Private Sector…"[28] The SecDef is also directed to "create a stability operations center to coordinate stability operations research, education and training, and lessons learned."[29]

Given just the number of operations conducted and ongoing as part of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), it would seem, at least for U.S. players, both military and civilian, that there should be a large amount of content, a lot of existing interagency lessons learned "out there – somewhere." It would also seem that we have a construct and the necessary, appropriate policy and guidance to implement a consolidated SLLP – one built on the most likely operational scenarios for future civilian-military interaction and cooperation during military operations and their associated SSTR operations. An SLLP that supports future pre-operational and operational planning, collaboration, and execution, and facilitates the capture, analysis and vetting, and dissemination of lessons learned from these SSTR scenarios and operations. But, policy and guidance does not a program make – what and where are the necessary resources – e.g. funding, manpower; equally important, do we have the intellectual and emotional commitment on the part of all players to make this a viable program? Before being able to answer these questions, it is necessary to go into some additional detail as to the structure and objectives of the SLLP. What follows is a discussion on the proposed organizational components and some proposed missions, roles, and functions of the SLLP.

No single agency within either the DoD community or within the NSC-Interagency community will be able to effectively implement the SLLP nor would it be economically feasible to establish a new organization to do this. The SLLP envisioned by this study is more of a confederation of member agencies and programs – government, private sector, international and domestic – and individual SMEs, that can contribute their existing knowledge, data repositories, analysts, procedures and other resources to support the overall functioning and effectiveness of the SLLP. The SLLP will be a network-enabled confederation that works, using web-based collaboration technologies as well as traditional face-to-face seminars and discussion/study groups, to achieve a "massing of expertise"[30] effect to apply to a problem. Being able to rapidly mass, at any time, the resident expertise of the Services, various government agencies, Embassy teams, NGOs and IOs, and individual SMEs brings to bear an incredible capability to resolve strategic level issues and challenges – rapidly and effectively.

Especially in the area of SSTR operations, where expertise resides in multiple agencies, with individuals that may be deployed to ongoing contingency operations, in military headquarters, units, Special Operations cells, and cached in Embassies throughout the world – none of which can be readily assembled in a single location – this massing of expertise provides the most viable and efficient means to bring together not only the right individuals, but also the existing lessons learned data, and other functional / operational doctrine, regulations, study results, etc. needed to develop timely solutions to problems – solutions with a high probability of lasting success. The SLLP will act as the conduit within which this massing of expertise can take place; the SLLP will also provide the environment within which we will be able to track what was done, by whom, with what resources and how effective were the results.

The physical structure of the SLLP would consist of a core cell or master node with multiple functional nodes all working within an advanced technical infrastructure. The core cell would provide general oversight, direction, guidance and operational management of the SLLP; a technical support team would be included in the core cell to provide necessary IT capabilities. We will refer to this cell as the "Center for Strategic Lessons Learned" (CSLL). The CSLL along with its IT infrastructure is the component of the SLLP that would require new funding to implement. The CSLL would initially only need to be a small group of 20-30 personnel (military and DoD civilian) and a contractor support group. Any future growth of this cell would be dependent on increased scope and potential consolidation with other activities or agencies, which could actually bring significant cost-savings in the long term. The major functions of the CSLL would include: coordination among agencies already doing lessons learned and lessons learned integration; managing an SLLP awareness program; developing an internal awareness of "what's out there" in the way of both military and interagency lessons learned capability and products; facilitating online collaboration (massing expertise) and/or onsite issue resolution activities (e.g. host and attend seminars, study groups); identifying gaps in the strategic lessons learned global knowledge base; developing a data / product normalization process; providing internal "case workers" and managing an external SME database to respond to user queries within the construct of a Request For Information (RFI) system; tailorable and focused dissemination of strategic level lessons learned products to senior civilian and military leaders, and working general technical support and specific technical interoperability issues related to network operations across the community. The CSLL would be staffed by a small military leadership team and then manned with predominantly DoD civilian analysts and action officers; contractors could also fill the analyst positions – we have already mentioned the challenge in being able to find skilled, strategic level analysts. A contractor-based cell would form the

technical team needed to conduct world-wide, web-based IT operations. There are other core activities and actions outside the direct purview of the CSLL that all agencies and players would have to perform or commit to performing that are critical for the overall effectiveness of the SLLP. In particular, "…all member states should … create (an) appropriate national (agency) data base of personnel trained for peace operations.**"31** "**The international community faces a major challenge in meeting the recent surge in demand for qualified peacekeepers."32

The functional nodes of the SLLP would consist of a group of government agencies and NGOs that would be referred to as the "primary" nodes and other relevant agencies and activities forming "secondary" nodes within the network. It is expected that the primary node members would already have a functional lessons learned program. The secondary member agencies and organizations may also have existing lessons learned programs or may just be agencies that the CSLL identifies that are important to the overall effectiveness of the SLLP; both groups will continue to grow over time. The secondary agencies would join the confederation either as branches off of the primary nodes or independently within the network. The IOC mentioned above, an activity managed by the NSC, acting as the primary interface between the CSLL and the interagency community, would be an example of a primary node. For the interagency community, "forming a permanent IOC is the necessary first step toward improving civilian-military responses to contingencies (complex operations). The IOC will improve responses in Washington, in the … regional commanders' headquarters, and in the field where unity of effort matters most."33 Other key or primary nodes within the interagency community would include: the Department of State – Office of the Coordinator for Stability and Reconstruction (S/CRS), the US Agency for International Development (USAID), the US Institute for Peace (USIP), the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), and the United Nation's Directorate of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) Best Practices Unit (BPU). Also within the UN are the Peace Building Commission (PBC) and the Peacebuilding Support Office (PSO), each of which can provide a wealth of operational expertise and lessons learned based on years of experience monitoring and reporting on SSTR operations. Over time, these key or primary nodes could be expected to develop their own special interest communities and "clusters" that would function independently, as branches from a primary node or within the main SLLP collaboration network – all using the Global Integrated Lessons Learned Network (GILN) infrastructure described below.

The key or primary nodes within the DoD community would include: the Service lessons learned agencies, ALSA, the JFCOM lessons learned cell, the GCC lessons learned cells, the ABCA (America – Britain – Canada – Australia) lessons learned activity, and the Army's

Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI) located at Carlisle Barracks, PA. The PKSOI has recently been designated as a Field Operating Agency (FOA) under the Department of the Army's G-3/5/7; the new Operational Integration Section

> serves as the fusion cell for PKSOI in support of JFCOM, Services, Geographic Combatant Commanders, interagency, allied and other foreign militaries, multinational organizations, and IOs/NGOs. Integrates current SSTRO & Peace Operations concepts, doctrine, and policy into operations, and experimentation. Capitalizes upon PKSOI and USAWC (Army War College) expertise and enlarges a multi-disciplinary SME network to provide expertise required by organizations preparing to participate in SSTRO & Peace operations.[34]

<u>This study recommends that the CSLL be integrated into the organizational structure of PKSOI</u> – either within the proposed Operational Integration Section or as an independent section or directorate. The CSLL would sponsor independent lessons learned collection efforts as well as collaborating with existing Service, JFCOM, or other agency planned collection efforts to meet strategic lessons learned requirements. The Services, JFCOM, and ALSA would be expected to support the CSLL's analytical work, providing their Service's and/or agency's perspective and assisting with the vetting of any CSLL specialized products. This group would also be expected to assist with the normalization of products originating in the interagency community. CSLL input to the Service and JFCOM efforts could result in a 'strategic annex' for their products as well as providing additional core data for any specialized products CSLL develops for the military strategic community.

The technical IT network, with associated collaboration tools, databases and structures, search and retrieval applications, etc, that will enable massing of expertise and that supports the day-to-day operations of the SLLP, we will refer to as the Global Integrated Lessons Learned Network (GILN). The contractor technical staff will be responsible for: web development and management (including a set of state-of-the-art collaboration tools and applications), database design and implementation, access and security management, search and retrieval utilities that span the various member lessons learned repositories and databases, the on-line RFI system, etc. A more detailed discussion of the technical specifics is beyond the scope of this study; the author accepts that this is a difficult undertaking that will take some time and money to fully implement and that requires a significant amount of coordination and effort to provide a workable level of interoperability with other existing Service and interagency systems; that there may be associated technology costs which the various members would be asked to absorb to join and actively participate in the SLLP "digital confederation."

A challenging function of the CSLL mentioned above that warrants some additional explanation is a data and product normalization process – for both existing products and those

yet to be developed by the SLLP participants.   Earlier in this study we established that current activity – analysis and product development – within the various agencies most often results in data and products that are very agency centric and perhaps of minimal use outside the source agency. These products would need to be sanitized of proprietary terminology / jargon / acronyms, biased analytical perspective, potential political overtones or "hidden agendas". The normalization process, as envisioned for this study, is an effort to take the existing information or new products as they are developed, in whatever format the source agency uses, and attempting to either restructure them using some mutually agreed-upon template, or to add metadata, summary data, or other content description – an abstract of sorts – to make the source information more understandable and usable across the multiple audiences that may have a need-to-know and want to use this information. The source data, the raw information would have to be protected and maintained, but this would remain the source agency's requirement. Normalization should also result in data and products that are more internet search engine friendly. Given the amount of existing information and the fact that we are "late getting started", this normalization will be a time consuming and challenging operation, but it is required to facilitate the more effective use of the available data and products across the diverse strategic lessons learned community.

Another activity that warrants special attention is the implementation of a SLLP awareness program. This program would need to be an information operations or strategic communications (STRATCOMM) effort conducted to establish a baseline of knowledge within the strategic lessons learned community of the existence of the SLLP, its membership and functions – i.e. what agencies are actively conducting lessons learned efforts, what type of lessons learned processes are being performed, associated products available, and where to / how to access this information; and secondly, to provide a mechanism for knowing when the various agencies will be conducting events – seminars, conferences – at which critical, emerging lessons learned information can be presented. Recurring events – annual, semi-annual, and quarterly – would be primary targets for the SLLP; regularly getting on the agenda for these major gatherings; working to the point where presentation and discussion on lessons learned and lesson learned integration and applicatioin becomes a core component of these meetings. Concerning the dissemination of lessons learned, several agencies and activities exist that are ideal for packaging and distribution – and then monitoring feedback – of strategic lessons learned products. The International Association of Peacekeeping Training Centers (IAPTC), sponsored by the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre in Canada is a prime example.[35] The IAPTC conducts an annual seminar where dissemination of lesson learned would be most

appropriate and perhaps have the greatest potential for subsequent distribution and actual integration of lessons learned into doctrine, policy, training and education across a more global audience. These meetings could also be used to announce upcoming special mission or focused strategic level lessons learned collection efforts, solicit participation as the lead for the collection effort or participation as an interested member on a multi-agency, multi-national collection team.

When planning and conducting actual, on-site / in-theater collection efforts – whether in the form of a directed collection team or as part of a longer duration or extended presence activity – e.g. CPA / ORHA / OMC leadership and staff; member of a Joint Interagency Coordination Group (JIACG); other diplomatic, UN or NATO commitment – an area of concern is the adequacy and appropriateness of any pre-deployment training. Training programs would need to provide the most current and relevant information on the region plus any special Embassy level information to "… develop appropriate and necessary regional skills, capabilities and cultural, situational awareness…"[36] for individual leaders, staff members and groups who may be involved in the collection and analysis of lessons learned data, either as their primary mission or as part of their day-to-day activity. For special mission or focused collection efforts, much of the pre-deployment training, planning and preparation could also be completed online using the web-based collaboration tools and environment maintained by the CSLL or other Service and/or interagency training venues. Training products and online courseware would be made available via the GILN, JFCOM's Joint Knowledge Development and Distribution Capability (JKDDC), other Service and agency web portals; the content of would be updated regularly and managed remotely by the Services, JFCOM, agencies and Embassies that develop the course syllabus and training products. These training and education products and services would be vetted with the various regional combatant commanders and Chief of Mission (COM) to ensure specific country, regional or in-theater pre-deployment training requirements are met. Additional pre-deployment activities such as querying the various SME database to develop the team, providing biographical and background data on the individual members; developing a formal collection plan / issue template, movement planning and itinerary – all of this could be accomplished remotely via the internet greatly reducing the cost for these missions.

Conclusion

Many senior leaders, both civilian and military, have acclaimed, "… the interagency process is broken." The implementation of a Strategic Level Lessons Learned Program (SLLP),

properly manned and resourced, would provide the necessary and appropriate processes and infrastructure within which to start "fixing" this deficiency. The conduct of stability, support, transition and reconstruction operations (SSTRO), Phase IV / V operations, civil-military operations, nation-building, or peacekeeping – whatever term you chose to use – will be prevalent in all future conflicts where our Armed Forces and US interagency players are committed to achieve our national strategic objectives. The SSLP environment provides an ideal construct within which to capture the experiences and the strategic lessons learned of the military and the larger civilian, interagency community – and at the same time, enhance the ability of the interagency and the military to work more effectively and efficiently together to respond to strategic level issues, to solve strategic level problems. More so than winning the "shooting war", success in these non-combat operations will be the decisive factor in determining the US's overall success or failure – from both the perspective of the global community – allies and enemies – as well as the towns and communities of the US who are asked to give their husbands and wives, sons and daughters – our national treasure – by serving in the military. "… American and international performance in future such circumstances (will) be strengthened by a more comprehensive effort to document and reflect on (previous) experience."[37] The success of the SLLP builds on and is actualized by robust, relevant, and ongoing tactical and operational lessons learned programs. These tactical and operational programs exist; we are at the right crossroads in time to implement a strategic level lessons learned program. A strategic level lessons learned program, as described in this study, can and will help to ensure that "winning the peace" is a reachable goal. If our senior leadership is willing to provide the resources, I am confident DoD and the interagency community can provide the will and the energy to make this program work.

I leave you with a final thought: "Fools say that they learn by experience. I prefer to profit by others' experiences." [Field Marshal Otto von Bismarck]

Endnotes

[1] B.H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy,* 2nd Revised Edition (New York: Meridian, 1991), 3-4.

[2] Harry R. Yarger, "Strategic Theory for the 21st Century: The Little Book on Big Strategy," The Letort Papers, (February 2006): 18. Yarger further develops and expands on the concepts of V-U-C-A from the "Strategic Leadership Primer," prepared for the Army War College in 1998; Roderick R. Magee II, Editor.

[3] Information superiority/dominance: the operational advantage derived from the ability to collect, process and disseminate an uninterrupted flow of information while exploiting or denying

an adversary's ability to do the same. (U.S. Department of the Army, *Operations*, Field Manual 3-0, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, June 2001).

[4] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Operations,* Joint Pub 3-0 and *Joint Operations Planning*, Joint Pub 5-0 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense/Joint Staff, August 2006) discuss the phases of operations, within a military campaign, and provide detailed definitions of each of the phases (Phasing Model see Figure IV-9, Joint Pub 5-0).

[5] See http://call.army.mil for command briefing, mission statement and organizational information on CALL and access to Army Lessons Learned repository and databases. Note: CALL also maintains a separate website to facilitate handling of CLASSIFIED information. This is accessible on the SIPRNET at: http://call.army.smil.mil .

[6] See https://afknowledge.langley.af.mil/afcks/defaullt.asp for command briefing, mission statement, organizational information on USAF Lessons Learned cell and access to USAF Lessons Learned repository. NOTE: Access to Lessons Learned requires site registration.

[7] See http://www.mccll.usmc.mil for command briefing, mission statement, organizational information on MCCLL and access to USMC Lessons Learned repository

[8] See http://www.nwdc.navy.com/NLL/nllsoverview.aspx for command briefing, mission statement, organizational information on USN lessons learned cell and access to USN Lessons Learned repositories.

[9] See http://www.jfcom.jwfc.mil/about/abt_j7.htm for information on the Joint Lessons Learned program. NOTE: most of JFCOM's actual lessons learned data, briefings and reports are only accessible through the SIPRNET.

[10] ALSA products can be reached at https://wwwmil.alsa.mil . Access requires registration.

[11] The Joint IED Defeat Organization (JIEDDO) was established in June 2005 as an activity of the Department of Defense (DoD). JIEDDO provides lessons learned Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTP), Smart Cards and other products that can be accessed via CALL's SIPRNET website.

[12] James Burack, William Lewis and Edward Marks, Workshop Directors, "Civilian Police and Multinational Peacekeeping – A Workshop Series: A Role for Democratic Policing," (Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice, October 1997), 18.

[13] "Beyond Goldwater-Nichols: Defense Reform for a New Strategic Era", Phase 1 Report, (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, March 2004), 60-68.

[14] Andrew Rathmell, et al, "Rand Study: Developing Iraq's Security Sector," (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation / National Defense Research Institute, 2005), 4.

[15] The Challenges Project, *Meeting the Challenges of Peace Operations: Cooperation and Coordination* (Elanders Gotab, Stockholm, 2005), 37 - Item #8.

[16] Ibid., 116 - Item #6. See (http://pbpu.unlb.org/pbpu).

[17] Ibid., 16 - Item #22.

[18] U.S. Department of Defense, *Unified Action Armed Forces (UNAAF),* Joint Pub 0-2 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense/Joint Staff, 10 July 2001), I-10.

[19] The Challenges Project, 124 - Item #24.

[20] Thomas Gibbings, Donald Hurley and Scott Moore, "Interagency Operations Center: An Opportunity We Can't Ignore," *Parameters* 28, (Winter 1998-1999): 107.

[21] Ibid., 102.

[22] George W. Bush, *Management of Interagency Efforts Concerning Reconstruction and Stabilization* National Security Presidential Directive / NSPD-44 (Washington, DC: The White House, 7 Dec 2005).

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

[26] The Clinton Administration's Policy on Managing Complex Contingency Operations: Presidential Decision Directive May 1997 (Washington, DC: NSC White Paper). This document was rescinded by the Bush administration and replaced with NSPD-44; the guidance and direction for the interagency concerning lessons learned operations was captured and is available in the *Handbook for Interagency Management of Complex Contingency Operations* published by OASD (S&R). You can obtain a copy by calling 703-614-0421.

[27] Ibid.

[28] U.S. Department of Defense, *Military Support for Stability, Support, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations* DoD Directive 3000.05 (DODD 3000.05.) (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense/Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), 28 Nov 2005).

[29] Ibid.

[30] Kelly Houlgate, Major, USMC, "A Unified Command Plan for a New Era," (Carlisle Barracks, PA: USAWC Selected Readings, Implementing National Military Strategy, Vol I, 5 Dec 2006 – 7 Feb 2007), 1-2. Maj Houlgate introduces the concept of "massing expertise" as a capability goal for DoD and the military community. This concept or capability would also be a significant enabler for the SLLP.

[31] The Challenges Project, 26 - Item #59.

[32] The Challenges Project, 115 - Item #2.

[33] Gibbings, et al. *Parameters* 28, 108.

[34] From "PKSOI Organization Overview to Concept Plan." This concept plan was submitted as part of the initiative to transition PKSOI to a Field Operating Agency (FOA) under HQDA, G-3/5/7. The Organization Overview is Annex 3 to the Concept Plan.

[35] The Challenges Project, 127 - Item #38. The Pearson Peacekeeping Centre was established at the request of the Government of Canada in 1994. The International Association of Peacekeeping Training Centres (IAPTC) is an open and voluntary association of centres, institutions, and programs dealing with peace operations research, education, and training. It was initiated by Canada's Pearson Peacekeeping Center (PPC) in 1995. The IAPTC promotes better understanding of peacekeeping, its goals and objectives, and of the methods used in training for peace operations of all types. It is intended to broaden contacts between various international organizations, peacekeeping training centres and institutions, universities, and other interested groups, leading to more effective peace operations. See http://www.iaptc.org for details on IAPTC and the Pearson Centre. (Description of Pearson Centre and IAPTC above is taken from this website.)

[36] The Challenges Project, 130 - Item #41.

[37] Andrew Rathmell, et al, Rand Study, 6.